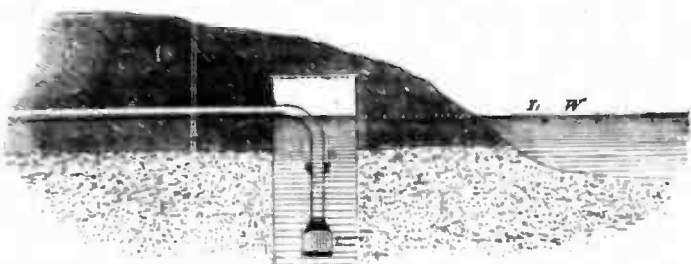


FILTER FOR THAMES WATER.



PLAN FOR FILTERING THAMES WATER.

We are indebted for the following communication to Mr. Thomas Wicksteed, the engineer, to whom it was originally addressed. The plan is simple, and would of course be applicable to other streams.

Sir,—I beg to inclose a sketch of the plan I have adopted to obtain a supply of clear or filtered water, at all times of the tide, for the use of a steam-engine on the bank of the river Thames, and which I hope will be sufficiently explanatory.

A is the suction-pipe leading to the engine, about 600 feet in length.

B is a cylinder, sunk within about 25 feet of low-water mark.

C is a common rose head on the end of suction-pipe.

D is a close cover on the top of the cylinder.

E. Mud and gravel.

F. Clean sand and gravel, which forms the filtering medium.

After clearing out about 4 feet of mud, peat, &c., we got into loose shingle, and at the depth shown it is sand and gravel, which admits a very great quantity of perfectly clear or filtered water, and which I think scarcely possible to exhaust by ordinary means: at all events we had two engines at work on the suction of Messrs. Blackett's saw-mills, Bankside, with hand pumps also, and could not lower the water in the cylinder at low-water. I had the same result at Sir John Rennie's, and I have no doubt an unlimited quantity of water may be obtained by having a greater surface in the cylinder or well.

JOHN AIRD.

Thames-street, Greenwich, Jan. 24, 1848.

PREVENTION OF ROT.

Sir,—The recommendations in the late number of THE BUILDER are very good, as they go to the total removal of the cause: but the following plan succeeded with the smallest cost, by insulating the house from the wet below.

It was devised above twenty years back, by a gentleman who possessed two houses in Stamford-street, where the wet crept up the walls and destroyed every thing against them to a considerable height.

He provided a sufficient number of parallel slates to extend all round the two houses; they were longer than the thickness of the walls, and square-edged to fit close together; then below the floor, but higher than any water could ever reach, he passed a thick saw into the mortar and quite through the wall, and as this advanced he inserted the slates with cement all round the two houses and their party walls; literally sawing the houses from their foundations, and inserting a layer of slates, through which it is known water or damp cannot pass.

This sufficiently cured the mischief, and the walls kept dry ever after.

In another case, forty years ago, in a house at Paddington, where there was not sufficient means of drainage, the land-springs frequently flooded the kitchen floors. My friend had a well dug under the wall between the two kitchens, and put a pump there, and removed the soft water pipe and cistern into the yard at the back of the house, purposely to render

access to the pump the most convenient, consequently it was so much used as to keep the house and floors quite dry. He always found the surface in the well much lower than the kitchen floors, even in the worst weather.

I will mention a third plan, used in a house where the stone floor was not flooded, but always damp.

The stones were taken up, and the earth made level and covered with sand. Over this, and close up to the walls, two layers of strong brown paper dipped in tar were laid so as to overlap and break joint; this was well covered with sand, and the stones relaid, and they kept dry.—I am, Sir, &c.

CORNELIUS VARLEY.

Charles-street, Clarendon-square,
January 26, 1848.

SCULPTURED versus PAINTED DECORATIONS.

THE discussions at the Decorative Art Society, which followed the paper on theatrical decoration, mentioned in our last number but one, turned on the respective properties of relievo forms and ornamental painting. Mr. Whitelaw, a member, said painting could exhibit landscapes and similar effects, which do not come within the scope of sculptured limits, but sculpture would be found superior to painting in many cases: from its admitting of being distinctly seen from every point of view; and, further, as it is capable of producing stronger impressions on the mind. He noticed objections which had been offered respecting the thickness sometimes evident in the composition of relievo forms, and which he argued are ill-founded, for it should be remembered that, while objects in nature have a transparent medium, ornament is ordinarily required to act reflectingly, by so exaggerating light, and reducing shadow within itself, as to produce an intended effect. An anecdote from Pliny, respecting the Athenian Minerva, was related in illustration of this view, and the modern application of stamped brass, was named as being usually objectionable in effect, owing to the thinness of the metal, although it is not thinner than leaves; and many natural objects imitated therein. He concluded by observing, that painting and sculpture have each their appropriate localities, but he considered ornamental painting to be subordinate in importance and grandeur to sculpture.

Other members contended that reliefs have more of reality in its effect, and, at all times, stronger illusive properties than painting. The practice of painting reliefs and sculpture white, was disapproved of by some, but sculpture composed of differently coloured marbles, was not to be recommended, although it was suggested that sculpture coloured after nature, would produce effects which painting on the flat could never equal. References were made upon this point to the Nimroud marbles, on which a kind of enamel remains upon the eyes of horses and men, as shewing an ancient practice.

Mr. Laugher observed, that the result alluded to respecting the use and effect of stamped brass, is entirely caused by the condition of light in which it is usually placed, as is evident from the pleasing effect of artificial flowers which are generally seen in a diffused

light. Mr. Dwyer contended, that in spacious rooms massive forms are essential, and that, therefore, in Whitehall Chapel, reliefs would have been in better taste than Rubens' painted ceiling; that in the Chapel Royal, St. James's, Holbein's ceiling is importantly assisted by the projecting ribwork and bosses, and that a painted imitation of such structural reliefs would be especially objectionable upon ceilings. It was ultimately agreed that sculpture and painting ought to be used more frequently together, having a regard to a proper relation of subordinate parts.

THE LATE WESTMINSTER COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

SIR,—I should not wish to take any notice of the attack made upon my character by Mr. Donaldson, in your paper of the week before last, as any man of ordinary feeling can imagine, that it refers to a subject which I would not willingly ever upon. But as a surveyor of the Metropolitan Commissioners of Sewers, I feel that some explanation is due to the public; and I will now only inclose three letters, without note or comment, leaving your readers to draw their own inference as to the attack made upon me by one who attended the court at which the last letter was read.—I am, &c.

Feb. 3, 1848.

JOHN PHILLIPS.

(Copies.)

25th November, 1846.

"SIR,—Understanding that it is your intention to employ a near relative of mine upon the works to the sewers in Grosvenor-square and neighbourhood, I think it right to inform you that, in my opinion, such a course is scarcely consistent with my position at this office.

You may suppose that by so doing, you are conferring a favour upon me, and I thank you for good intentions; but my impression is that you may thus afford opportunity to ill-disposed persons to make invidious and ill-natured remarks equally undeserved by you as by myself.

Do not suppose that I am attempting unduly to interfere with, or control your arrangements, but I offer you these remarks in the most friendly spirit: you, of course, can act as you think proper.

I am, &c.

(Signed) JOHN PHILLIPS, Surveyor.

Mr. James Starker."

"14th December, 1846.

"SIR,—I have repeatedly requested you not to employ my relatives on the works of the Westminster sewers; and I have just been informed by a commissioner that it has been reported to him that you are, at my request, employing them, and that in consequence I am allowing improper work to be done.

Such reports and statements are extremely annoying to me, and I feel it to be my duty, as the surveyor to this court, again to urge upon you, to the fullest extent of my authority, the absolute necessity of your immediately ceasing to employ them on any works connected with this office.

(Signed) J. P.

Mr. James Starker."

Extract from the Orders of Court, 14th December, 1846, vol. 47, p. 428.

A letter, as follows, was read:—

"24, Vincent-street, Westminster.

15th December, 1846.

"Gentlemen,—Having an extensive contract under your commission, which I am now executing, I have in my employ a bricklayer who is related to your surveyor. I have upon two occasions received a note from him desiring me to discharge him, and not employ him upon any works connected with this commission; but I have not done so, for I cannot conceive what right or authority any one has to interfere with those I employ as long as they execute the works to the satisfaction of those who may please to employ me; if any thing can be proved where he has not done so, I will immediately dismiss him. I must beg of your honourable court to bear in mind that I employed this person long before I knew there was such an individual as Mr. John Phillips (your surveyor) in existence. On whatever works I may have the honour of being employed by you, my object always has been, and ever will be, to execute them in a sound and efficient manner, but I must, at the same time, most respectfully reserve to myself the right of employing whom I please.—I am, &c.

(Signed) JAMES STARKER.

Ordered that the said letter do lie on the table.

A NEW WORKHOUSE FOR ST. PANCRA'S is to be erected at a proposed cost of 6,000*l.* to be defrayed by a rate for the purpose.